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AUTHOR Clark, Jill; Brunger, Melinda
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines relationships between measures of educational interest group strength, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA); characteristics of state education agencies (SEA); and selected indicators of educational policy centralization. The more specific purpose of this study is the discovery of patterns of both interest group (AFT and NEA) and SEA influences on educational policy choices in different regions and political culture types. State educational policy centralization or decentralization is operationalized in terms of relative state or local responsibilities in two program areas: textbook selection and student testing for grade promotion or graduation (competency-based education). The findings suggest that the internal and external policymaking distinctions are useful for understanding the correlates of state educational centralization policies. More specifically, there is an association between interest group or SEA resources and policy choices for the population of states and generally within regions. High levels of bureaucratic resources tend to be associated with policy centralization; conversely, strong interest group resources tend to be associated with policy decentralization. Appended are 5 tables, 21 notes, a 23-item bibliography, and 2 appendixes that show the data sources. (Author/MLF)

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Regional Variations in Educational Centralization: The Influences of Interest Groups and State Education Agencies

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By Jill Clark and Melinda Brunger

Department of Political Science
University of Texas - Arlington

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Introduction

This paper examines relationships between measures of educational interest group strength (the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association), characteristics of State Education Agencies (SEA), and selected indicators of educational policy centralization. The analysis is comparative, and units of analysis include the population of the American states. The more specific purpose of this study is the discovery of patterns of both interest group (AFT and NEA) and SEA influences on educational policy choices in different regions and political culture types.[1] State educational policy centralization or decentralization refers here to differences in the division of powers between state and local governments over educational programs. It is operationalized in terms of relative state or local responsibilities in two program areas: texbook selection and student testing for grade promotion or graduation (competency-based education).[2]

In certain states, textbooks for all schools are selected by a statewide committee; in others, local school districts choose classroom materials. Over two-thirds of the American states now have competency-based education (CBE) programs. In some cases, state officials set standards and provide testing materials; alternatively, other programs leave implementation to local school districts. Thus, these centralization variables indicate the degree to which a state has enacted specific mandates concerning the state role in textbook selection and in the administration of competency-based education programs.

There are a number of reasons for the examination of educational interest group, SEA, and policy centralization patterns in terms of region and political culture. First, the educational literature suggests that state educational centralization patterns are at least partially the result of

regional histories. In the South, for example, there has been stronger, state-directed intervention in education dating from the Civil War. In New England, on the other hand, a strong tendency toward local control produced a more decentralized educational policy establishment.[3] This decentralized pattern was later generally incorporated in the development of school systems in the mid-western and western United States. Additionally, there is the argument that regional neighbors tend to formulate policies similar to one another, sometimes simply borrowing programs.[4]

Educational policy centralization might also be distinguished on the basis of Elazar's three political culture types: individualistic, moralistic and traditionalistic. That is, the strong citizen participation norms and the tendency to rely on local government initiatives, characteristics of the moralistic political culture, suggest a relatively decentralized educational policy structure. Elazar argues as follows:

> At the same time, the strong commitment to communitarianism characteristic of that political culture tends to channel the interest in government intervention into highly localistic paths so that a willingness to encourage local government intervention to set public standards does not necessarily reflect a concomitant willingness to allow outside governments equal opportunity to intervene.[5]

However, an alternative interpretation of the moralistic political culture sees this type as ambivalent in terms of which level of government (state or local) has priority over policymaking areas.[6] The elitist overtones of the traditionalistic culture, on the other hand, imply the possibility of greater centralization in the educational policy area.[7] The implications of the individualistic political culture type are that its strong individualistic elements and patronage politics orientation make a tendency toward decentralization more likely.[8]

A second reason for examining the educational centralization issue from

a political cultural perspective is found in the results of a comparative state analysis done by Wirt.[9] He asks the question whether state policy centralization in the educational establishment is related to the state's share of educational costs: does control follow the dollar? His findings show no strong relationship between state funding commitments and centralization for the population of states. However, when he examines the association between these two policy variables by political culture types, he can differentiate state patterns. The clearest pattern is in the traditionalistic culture, where comparative rankings on state centralization and state financial responsibility are both the highest.[10]

Third, while other researchers have examined regional or political cultural alignments in expenditure policy, there has been little analysis of nonfiscal policy outputs by these state subset groupings.[11] Furthermore, unlike most expenditure studies, the issue here is not whether socioeconomic factors or political system variables are more important policy correlates. Instead, this study hopes to highlight different patterns of relationships between educational interest groups, SEAs, and policy in different contexts.

More specifically, educational centralization is treated as a state government policy output. Two categories of possible influences on that policy are proposed: educational interest groups (the AFT and the NEA) and state SEAs. In effect, interest groups represent a policymaking influence external to the political system; and SEAs, an influence within the government. Thus, an examination of relationships between interest groups, SEAs, and centralization by region and political culture types will be suggestive of different state policymaking systems in terms of internal and external policy influences.

The literature describing the policymaking process suggests that a

variety of actors may be influential in program adoption; in this case, educational centralization: elected officials, bureaucrats, interest groups, or interested citizens. While the importance of these actors varies from policy to policy, there are two competing, general explanations of the relative influence of these forces on policy adoptions. The first, whether categorized as pluralism, elitism, or interest group liberalism, is based on the argument that influences external to the political system are most salient for understanding the policy process.[12] In the case of pluralism, multiple elites compete; and the political system referees and legitimates the outcome of intergroup conflict. The political elites themselves may participate in the policy process. The elitist perspective, on the other hand, asserts that a monolithic, single elite orchestrates the process; political elites are simple functionaries for the dominant elite. The interest group liberalism framework posits a triad of power over discrete policy areas: interest groups, legislative committees, and the bureaucracy. While political decisionmakers assume a key role in policymaking, this perspective still envisions a major role for interest groups external to the political system, groups that typically encounter cooperative or coopted bureaucrats and public officials.

The alternative version of explaining significant influences on policy is the notion of a state centric policymaking system.[13] The argument here is that most policy initiation is the product of government action. In other words, the dominant policymaking function is within the political system, in the hands of programmatic "experts" and policy planners or elected officials. Hudson, for example, contends "This state-centered perspective argues that even in democratic societies, officials occupying governmental positions possess the capacity to act autonomously of societal forces."[14]

The question, then, is whether there is variance in the policymaking process (external versus internal influences) among states with different regional histories or political culture norms. Cobb et al. in a theoretical essay, "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process," generate a potentially relevant hypothesis based on the internal versus external distinction:

"The more complex the social structure and economy of a society, the less likely that any single pattern (external or internal) will predominate."[15]

This hypothesis is really intended for cross-national comparisons; thus, it may be meaningful in the American state context only in suggesting that some state policies will show a primary external influence pattern; others, an internal pattern. That is, it is possible that interest groups are prime movers on certain educational centralization issues, while the bureaucracy is more instrumental on others.

Furthermore, it is possible that the resources available to educational interest groups or SEAs may be related to policy centralization or decentralization. That is, a strong internal resource base (SEA) suggests centralization, and a strong external resource base (interest group strength), decentralization. What, then, is the current status of resources of educational interest groups and SEAs in relation to this hypothesis?

According to students of state politics, there has typically been a strong nexus between state departments of education and teacher organizations, particularly the NEA, dating from the 1960s. Practitioner and scholar James B. Conant, for example, made these observations in 1964: "The major

weakness of all state departments of education I have encountered, with perhaps one or two exceptions, is that they are too much a part of the educational establishment. That is, I found many of these agencies ... to be no more than 'willing tools' of the interests of clientele, particularly the education association (that is, the state NEA affiliate)."[16] In other words, Conant implies that the NEA regards the state educational bureaucracy as an extension of its own lobbying resources; and it is plausible that interest group members and state officials often share common values and norms acquired during the socialization process in university departments of education. According to this perspective, interest groups and SEAs function as partners in lobbying the state legislature for policies beneficial to the educational establishment, and Conant suggests interest grooups have the status of dominant partner. In other words, this description of state educational politics is strongly suggestive of an external influence pattern.

SEAs may appear a more attractive ally to interest groups since state departments received a tremendous boost from federal action in 1965: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided funds for increasing professional staff, usually doubling it.[17] On the other hand, it is possible that the bureaucracy has moved toward a position more independent of interest group influence. In fact, there is recent evidence that SEAs have self-consciously moved away from their close alliances with teacher organizations. Usdan comments, "As state officials they are somewhat vulnerable to aligning themselves too intimately with private interest groups striving to gain increased state support for education. More that one state education department has been chastised by taxpayer groups or tax-conscious legislators because of its close association with 'the education lobby'."[18]

Further indications of potential power conflicts between state officials and the NEA are more explicitly outlined by Jarolimek:

> All signs point to stormy times ahead in the relationships between teacher organizations like the NEA and its affiliates and those institutions that have anything to do with the training of teachers, setting standards for entry into the profession, conducting, and selecting teachers and their placement. it is clear that the NEA wants to control these processes because, from its perspective, it views such activities as legitimate professional concerns. Naturally, state certification officers, boards of education, and, most particularly, institutions of higher education take a different view.[19]

Recent accounts of state educational politics suggest two additional developments regarding educational interest groups. The first is the growth of the AFT in representing teachers and the consequent fragmentation of a unified educational lobby. Furthermore, the AFT, unlike the NEA, tends to concentrate its resources at the local level. Thus, in order to compete with AFT initiatives, the NEA has shifted some of its resources from the state to the local level. Second, both organizations have become more aggressive and militant on teacher compensation and benefit issues; and both the NEA and the AFT have severed their connections with organizations representing school administrators. As a result, the image of teacher groups as nonpolitical, neutral educational experts has shifted, and the newer, more activist teacher organizations may be less amenable to alliances with SEAs.

These developments--more independently powerful SEAs, and a fragmentation of interest group unity--raise the possibility that in some cases SEAs act on their own initiative, rather than in concert with interest groups. In effect, SEAs may then sometimes function as a policymaking influence within state government, where the state centric framework best explains the nature of the policymaking process. Furthermore, it is likely that the resources of both interest groups and SEAs vary from state to state; thus the patterns of policymaking (external or internal) may also be different.

Finally, the argument here is that these patterns may be related to the broader political contexts of states--regionalism or political culture.

Concepts and Indicators

Educational centralization or decentralization in textbook selection is suggested by a scale; each state received an additive rating based on scoring one point for each of the following practices: (1) supplying a state guidance list for texts, (2) requiring text samples from text publishers, (3) state adoption of elementary texts, (4) state adoption of secondary texts, and (5) state adoption of supplementary materials.

The basic tendencies in state or local control over competency-based education programs were coded as follows: (1) centralized--state sets standards and administers tests or directs the program at the state level and (2) decentralized--no competency-based education program exists at the state level.

NEA resources are measured for each state in two ways: (1) NEA organization, or number of NEA members divided by total teachers--the strength of NEA organization related to total potential membership, and (2) NEA dominance, or number of NEA members divided by total number of organized teachers (both NEA and AFT)--in other words, relative power balance of NEA and AFT. The inverse of this second measure is AFT dominance, so that for any correlation with NEA dominance the sign is simply reversed to show the correlation with AFT relative dominance. The strength of the AFT is calculated for each state as AFT organization, or the number of AFT members divided by total teachers. Total interest group strength, percent organized, is the ratio of the sum of NEA and AFT members to total teachers.

SEA resources are measured as total staff, total budget, and total white-collar salary allocation. A fourth variable of SEA strength--total white-collar salaries divided by school-age population--measures a state's commitment of resources to SEA salaries in proportion to the size of the department's clientele. This adjusted variable permits the direct comparison of large and small states.

Political culture measures--individualistic, traditionalistic, and moralistic--come from Elazar's classic designation of the American states. Given the regional history of state educational systems, distinctions are made between the north and the south. Additionally, states are broken into sections defined by the U.S. Census Bureau: east, north central, west, and south.

Hypotheses and Analytical Methods

There are four general hypotheses that organize analysis.

The first hypothesis examines relationships between interest group and SEA resources and educational policy centralization for the population of states.

H_1: There are likely to be different relationships between interest group and SEA resources and the two measures of educational policy centralization.

This expectation is based first on the broader hypothesis (introduced earlier) that where social and economics structures are complex, neither the external (interest group) nor the internal (state centrism) influence pattern will predominate. In other words, interest group resources may be tied to centralization in one policy area; and SEA resources, to centralization in the other. In this case it is plausible to argue that interest group resources may show some association with state textbook selection: the stronger the interest group resources in a state, the more decentralized

the textbook selection process. This argument is based on the assumption that strong teacher lobbies are likely to favor policy in the direction of textbook selection by local districts where classroom teachers can exercise more influence.

SEAs, on the other hand, may be more instrumental in the CBE program area, where managerial, professional objectives are more apparent. In other words, CBE centralization may tend to be associated with relatively high levels of SEA resources, resources useful in either the design or the implementation of CBE programs. Thus, the expectation is that the greater the SEA resources, the more likely a state-centralized CBE program. Finally, interest group resources are not expected to show a relationship with CBE centralization, or SEA resources, with textbook selection. In other words, the textbook policy may be tied to an external influence pattern; CBE, to an internal influence pattern. The statistical procedure in this case is regression analysis; correlation coefficients (Pearsonian r's) are reported.

The second hypothesis predicts differences in educational policy centralization (CBE and textbook selection) by section and by political culture.

H_2: Policy centralization scores will vary by section and political culture.

The methods employed to test this hypothesis will include calculation of policy means for sectional and political culture groups and application of a difference-of-means test. Percentage tables are also shown. The expectation of significant differences among state groupings is, of course, based on earlier arguments describing distinct sectional developments and political culture orientations in state educational systems.

Finally, relationships between interest group and SEA resources and centralization or decentralization in textbook and CBE policies will be examined within political culture types and within regions. The purpose of this investigation is to discover whether the relationships between resource measures and policy choices are the same for all regions and political culture types or if there are regional exceptions to the pattern established for the population.

Results will be presented in percentage tables showing the associations between resource measures and policy choices first in terms of political culture and then by region.

Two general hypotheses guide this part of the analysis:

H_3: The relationships between external interest group influences and textbook policy and between internal SEA resources and CBE centralization will hold true within specific political culture types.

H_4: The relationships between external interest group influences and textbook policy and between internal SEA resources and CBE centralization will hold true within regional areas.

The reason for these expectations is that both resource variables and policy choices are likely to exhibit regional or political cultural similarities. For example, teacher organizations are likely to be stronger in the East than in the South; and, southern states are expected to show policy centralization tendencies as a result of their unique regional history. Thus, the relationship between the interest group resource variables and policy centralization are likely to remain the same within regions as for the general population.

The purposes of this part of the analysis, then, are simply (1) to identify different regional patterns in terms of interest group and SEA resources or political and policy choices and (2) to determine whether the relationship between resource measures and policy choices remains consistent within regions.

Findings

Hypothesis 1: There are likely to be different relationships between interest group and SEA resources and the two measures of educational policy centralization.

The findings confirm the hypothesis that different patterns will prevail in the two policy areas, CBE and textbook adoption. The strength of external interest group resources--measured by the relative strengths of AFT and NEA organizations (the respective organizational memberships as a percent of total teachers) and percent of teachers organized--is significantly correlated, in a negative or decentralized direction, with textbook adoption. NEA dominance, or the NEA members as a proportion of all organized teachers, is not significantly related to the textbook measure. The percentage of teachers organized shows the strongest negative correlation with centralized textbook adoption (-.52), but the strength of the AFT organization (-.32) and the NEA organization (-.26) are also significantly negatively correlated with textbook centralization at the state level. The results indicate, however, that external or interest group resources are specific to the textbook policy area, since no significant relationships are found between the measures of interest group strength and the CBE policy measure.

] Table 1 [

The CBE measure does, however, show significant positive relationships with three measures of SEA strength: total budget (.36), white-collar salaries (.45), and salary expenditures per school-age child (.36). No significant correlation exists between CBE centralization and the size of the SEA staff. These findings suggest that when the internal bureaucratic system (SEA) commands high levels of resources, CBE policy is likely to be centralized.[20]

Hypothesis 2: Policy centralization scores (means) will vary by region and by political culture.

The test for hypothesis 2 consists of grouping states according to geographical regions and political culture types and then determining the mean centralization level for each region or political culture classification. Census categories of east, west, south, and north-central represent the four geographical regions used; and political culture is likewise segmented into traditionalistic, moralistic, and individualistic types.* Results (Table 2) show that different sections of the country and different political culture types exhibit different levels of centralization in textbook selection and in competency-based education.

] Table 2 [

In terms of textbook centralization, the South shows the highest tendency toward centralization (a mean of 4.57 on a scale of 0 to 5). The difference-of-means test (t-test) shows that the South is significantly different from the other three sections of the country on this policy output measure. Furthermore, the findings show statistically significant differences in the levels of textbook centralization among all geographical regions. After the South (4.57), the West ranks second in mean text stringency (2.91), followed by the North-Central region (1.50). The East, with a mean of 0.09, is conspicuously decentralized in textbook selection, suggesting that more discretion in textbook selection lies with teachers and local districts.

On the measure of CBE centralization, the South shows roughly the same level of centralization (a mean of 2.00) as the West (2.09) and East (2.18). In the CBE policy area, it is the North-Central region that exhibits a significantly different tendency, this time in the direction of decentralization, that contrasts with the other three regions. The mean CBE score for the decentralized North Central region is 1.25 (on a scale of 1 to 3).[21]

* Appendix B lists the states by region and political culture.

Political culture proves to be somewhat less useful than region for analyzing educational policy variation among the states. None of the political culture types shows significant differences in CBE centralization. In the area of text selection, however, the traditionalistic states show a high level of centralization (a mean of 4.56) in comparison with the moralistic (1.59) and individualistic (1.00) states. The difference between the latter two types is not statistically significant. Since the "South" regional classification largely parallels the "traditionalistic" political culture type, the statistical profiles for these two categories are, predictably, very similar.

The percentage tables further illustrate these findings. Each state is evaluated to determine whether it fits a centralized or decentralized pattern on CBE and whether it fits a centralized, decentralized, or mixed pattern in text adoption. Then the states are tabulated according to region and political culture type. This classification system corroborates the findings obtained by the comparison of means.

] Table 3 [

In terms of political culture, the strongest pattern is the high level of centralization found in traditionalistic states, predominantly in text selection (94 percent), but also in CBE to a lesser degree (69 percent). The individualistic and moralistic types do not show clear tendencies.

] Table 4 [

Classification by region produces a more distinct pattern of results. The South is once again highly centralized, both on text selection (93 percent) and on CBE (64 percent). The West is also strongly centralized, although in this case the emphasis is more on CBE (91 percent) than on text adoption (64 percent). As predicted from the comparison of means, the dominant decentralized patterns are found in the East for textbook selections (91 percent) and in the

North-Central region for CBE (83 percent).

Overall, then, the hypothesis predicting political culture and regional differences receives some support here. That is, regional differences are more salient in terms of textbook selection policies than for CBE programs. Finally, Southern states show the most consistent, distinctive pattern in comparison to other regions and political culture types. That is, the expected Southern centralization pattern is apparent in both policy areas. The Eastern and North Central states show a tendency toward decentralization, but not as consistently as expected. Eastern states show a strong decentralization pattern in textbook selection, but not in regard to CBE programs. The North Central States, on the other hand, are decentralized in terms of CBE, but exhibit a moderately centralized position on textbook selections.

Perhaps the most surprising result here is in the West, which shows centralizing tendencies in both CBE and textbook policies.

Hypothesis 3: The relationships between external interest group influences and textbook policy and between internal SEA resources and CBE centralization will hold true within specific political culture types.

The classification of states by political culture yields only one distinctive pattern on CBE and text centralization (see Tables 1 and 2): traditionalistic states tend toward centralization in both policy areas. Based on the correlations (Pearsonian r's) reported in hypothesis 1, the expectation is that textbook centralization will be associated with weak external interest groups (NEA and AFT), and CBE centralization will be associated with strong internal bureaucratic (SEA) resources. These expectations are confirmed not only for the population of states as a whole, but also for the traditionalistic subset of states.

In the traditionalistic political culture type, 15 of 16 states (94 percent) mandate extensive state intervention in selecting school textbooks. Of these 15 states that follow centralized text selection policies, 80 percent (12) show low levels of AFT organizational strength and low percentages of teachers organized; that is, these states fall into the lower half of the 48 contiguous states on these measures. Similarly, 73 percent (11) of this group rank low on NEA organizational strength. In terms of NEA dominance (the strength of the NEA relative to the number of organized teachers), the centralized traditionalistic states show comparatively high ratios of NEA members to the total number of organized teachers.

In the CBE policy area, the traditionalistic type once again shows a centralized pattern. Of the 16 traditionalistic states, 11 (69 percent) mandate state guidelines for CBE programs. As expected, high levels of SEA resources characterize these centralized states: 82 percent (9) rank high on number of SEA staff, 73 percent (8) rank high on total SEA expenditures and on total white-collar salaries, and 55 percent (6) rank high on SEA salaries per school-age child.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between external interest group influences and textboook policy and between internal SEA resources and CBE centralization will hold true within specific regions.

Again, correlation coefficients for the entire population of states indicate that CBE centralization will be associated with strong SEAs and, additionally, that text centralization will be associated with weak external interest groups (NEA and AFT). The classification of states by region yields several distinctive patterns on these two policy output variables.

In the CBE policy area, the South (64 percent, or 9 states) and the

West (91 percent, or 10 states) exhibit centralized patterns. These centralized states are expected to rank high on internal bureaucratic (SEA) resources. The Southern pattern does, in fact, show a high level of SEA resources in the 9 centralized states--89 percent (8 states) rank high on SEA white-collar salaries. The West, however, contrasts dramatically with the South in this respect. Of the 10 centralized Western states, only 1 (10 percent) ranks high on SEA salaries. SEA salary expenditures per school-age child do not show a pattern of relationships with CBE centralization in either West or South. These findings suggest that whereas CBE centralization is related to SEA bureaucratic strength in the South, CBE policy is related to other factors in the Western states.

] Table 5 [

The relationship between CBE centralization and SEA resources is also confirmed by the decentralized pattern found in the North-Central region, where 10 of 12 states (83 percent) practice local rather than state control. Of these 10 states, 7 (70 percent) also have low levels of SEA salary expenditures per school-age child. The measure of total white-collar salaries shows no clear pattern of association with decentralization for the North-Central states.

In the area of textbook selection, the regional patterns confirm hypothesis 4. Text centralization is, as expected, associated with weak external teacher groups; and, conversely, local control over textbooks is related to interest group strength. Although the four regions exhibit varying tendencies toward centralization, the percentage of teachers organized is more likely to be high in the decentralized or moderately centralized regions.

] Table 6 [

The findings show higher levels of centralization in the South (93 percent,

or 13 states) and the West (64 percent, or 7 states) than in the East or North-Central region. Of the 13 Southern states that exercise a high level of state control over textbook choice, only 3 (23 percent) rank high on percentage of organized teachers. Similarly, of the 7 Western states with centralized text adoption, only 2 (29 percent) show high levels of teacher organization.

Conversely, the dominantly decentralized East (91 percent, or 10 states) is more likely to rank high on teacher organization (70 percent, or 7 states). States in the North-Central region fall dominantly into the category of moderate centralization (67 percent, or 8 states) but tend to show strong teacher organization (75 percent, or 6 states), like the East. These findings reinforce the hypothesis that even within regional groupings of states, interest group strength will be inversely related to the degree of state control over textbook selection.

The relative power balance between NEA and AFT (NEA dominance) shows a strong and consistent association with the degree of textbook centralization within regions. In the South, 12 of 13 centralized states (94 percent) rank high on NEA dominance; likewise, in the West, 4 of 7 centralized states (57 percent) rank high on relative NEA strength. The opposite pattern prevails in the two less centralized regions. In the East, 9 of 10 states (90 percent) with local control over texts show low levels of NEA dominance; in the moderately centralized North-Central region, 6 of 8 states (75 percent) also rank low on the NEA-to-AFT power balance. In short, the less centralized patterns are associated with relatively high AFT memberships.

Conclusions

The findings here suggest that the internal and external policymaking distinctions are useful for understanding the correlates of state educational centralization policies. More specifically, there is an association between interest group or SEA resources and policy choices for the population of states and generally within regions. High levels of bureaucratic resources tend to be associated with policy centralization; conversely, strong interest group resources tend to be associated with policy decentralization. Thus, it is plausible to argue that the locus of potential program influence (internal or external) may have policy consequences in terms of centralization or decentralization.

In this case, interest groups may see an advantage in decentralized textbook selections: local decisions may permit more input from teachers and teacher organizations. Furthermore, interest groups can bring statewide or even national influence to an individual school district. On the other hand, state bureaucrats may see an opportunity for enhancing their own power base through centralization. It is also possible that centralizing tendencies are more characteristic of management-oriented accountability policies like CBE.

While the results here do not touch the issue, it is conceivable that SEAs and interest groups form alliances on other educational policy issues, perhaps those that involve program funding or teacher compensation. That is, much of the earlier discussion of interest group-SEA alliances focuses on their mutual interest in fiscal decisions. The fragmentation between these two groups, on the other hand, tends to focus on issues involving major influence by one set of actors (interest groups) or the other (SEAs). It appears that textbook selections and CBE programs fall into the latter category.

Additionally, these findings on discrete policies and their correlates do raise questions about the fruitfulness of composite centralization indicators, especially if the focus of analysis is on relationships between policy influences and policy outcomes. That is, the results here clearly suggest that one set of resource indicators is tied to CBE programs, another set to textbook selection policies. This argument is bolstered by Wirt's findings--few statistically significant relationships between either socioeconomic or political system indicators and a composite state centralization measure.

The regional analysis identifies differences in policy patterns among sections. The Southern state tendency toward centralization is apparent, as well as less consistent Eastern and North-Central preferences for decentralization. The West shows the most unexpected results--patterns of centralization in both programs and a relatively small SEA establishment coupled with CBE centralization. The regional analysis, then, simply facilitates the identification of states that pursue either centralizing or decentralizing policies in textbook selection or CBE.

The political culture concept is not as useful as region in locating state policy preferences. Only the traditionalistic culture, the one that is essentially coterminous with the South, shows a clear-cut pattern in terms of policy centralization or decentralization.

It should be clear that this study does not address the meaning of the concept, region. There may be policy similarities within regions due to their histories, political beliefs, or socioeconomic environments. Alternatively, it is possible that regional neighbors tend to borrow programs from one another. Regional differences, however, are interesting--particularly the Western pattern of centralization compared to the relatively more decentralized tendencies of the Eastern and North-Central states. This pattern does invite speculation; and a clearer focus on the meaning of policy centralization or

decentralization provides a possible explanation.

The centralization position generally involves an argument in favor of statewide standardization or uniformity: in terms of the programs studied here, then, a preference for state determination of appropriate textbook content, and standards for student performance relevant to promotion or graduation. On the other hand, the decentralization perspective is focused on the notion that local determination and consequently program diversity is a priority. In effect, it may be that the centralization decision is substantive--geared toward preservation of cultural norms through textbook selection and achievement standards under the rubric of CBE. The decentralization perspective, alternatively, seems to highlight the salience of a procedural norm, decentralization. The findings here suggest, then, that North-Central and Eastern states tend to give priority to the procedural norm, while Westerners and Southerners show a preference for the substantive position, at least with respect to textbook selection and CBE programs.

One possible explanation is that the procedural norm faded as it was carried from the East to the North-Central region and finally to the West. It is also possible that Westerners, like Southerners, have a clear identification with their section of the country. If this is the case, then state centralization can function as a device for ensuring greater cultural uniformity. In other words, the substance of programs--textbook content or achievement standards--may take on more significance. The procedural norm, decentralization, might then be sacrificed in favor of substantive standards.

TABLE 1.--Relationships Between Policy Measures and Interest Group and SEA Resources (Simple Correlation Coefficients)

	MEASURES OF STATE CENTRAL POLICY CONTROL	
SEA VARIABLES	CBE Programs	Text Selection
SEA total staff	-	-
SEA total budget	.36*	-
SEA white-collar salaries	.45*	-
SEA salary expenditures, per school-age pupil	.36*	-
NEA organization	-	-.26*
AFT organization	-	-.32*
Percent organized	-	-.52*
NEA dominance	-	-

* Significant at .05 level or better.

Table 2.--Policy Centralization Means By Region and Political Culture

Region	CBE	Text Selection
West	2.09	2.91*
North-Central	1.25*	1.50*
East	2.18	0.09*
South	2.00	4.57*
	(Range: 1-3)**	(Range: 0-5)

Political Culture	CBE	Text Selection
Moralistic	1.77	1.59
Individualistic	1.87	1.00
Traditionalistic	2.00	4.56*
	(Range: 1-3)**	(Range: 0-5)

* Statistically significant differences (.05 level or better) between this region or political culture and all others.

** In this part of the analysis, the CBE measure is trichotomized: (1) state direction of CBE programs, (2) state guidelines for CBE programs, and (3) local option for CBE programs.

Table 3.--Educational Policy Centralization and Political Culture

Political Culture	Textbook Selection			Competency-Based Education	
	Centralized	Moderate Centralized	Decentralized	Centralized	Decentralized
Traditionalistic (n=16)	94% (15)	6% (1)	0% (0)	69% (11)	31% (5)
Individualistic (n=15)	13% (2)	27% (4)	60% (9)	53% (8)	47% (7)
Moralistic (n=17)	24% (4)	35% (6)	41% (7)	53% (9)	47% (8)

Table 4.--Educational Policy Centralization and Region

Region	Textbook Selection			Competency-Based Education	
	Centralized	Moderate Centralized	Decentralized	Centralized	Decentralized
East (n=11)	0% (0)	9% (1)	91% (10)	55% (6)	45% (5)
North-Central (n=12)	8% (1)	67% (8)	25% (3)	17% (2)	83% (10)
West (n=11)	64% (7)	9% (1)	27% (3)	91% (10)	9% (1)
South (n=14)	93% (13)	7% (1)	0% (0)	64% (9)	36% (5)

Table 5.--CBE Centralization and SEA Resources by Region

CENTRALIZATION PATTERN

	South	West
Percent of states centralized	64%	91%
Number of states centralized	9	10
Number of centralized states with high level of SEA white-collar salaries	8	1
(Percent)	89%	10%
Number of centralized states with high SEA salary expenditures per school-age child	5	6
(Percent)	56%	60%

DECENTRALIZATION PATTERN

	North-Central
Percent of states decentralized	83%
Number of states decentralized	10
Number of decentralized states with low level of SEA white-collar salaries	5
(Percent)	50%
Number of decentralized states with low SEA salary expenditures per school-age child	7
(Percent)	70%

Table 6.--Textbook Centralization and Teacher Organization by Region

	East	North-Central	West	South
Dominant pattern on text policy	DECENTR.	MOD. CENTR.	CENTR.	CENTR.
Number of states in dominant pattern	10	8	7	13
Percent of states in dominant pattern	91%	67%	64%	93%
Number of states in dominant pattern with high level of teacher organization	7	6	2	3
(Percent)	70%	75%	29%	23%
Rank on NEA dominance, among states in dominant pattern	low	low	high	high
Number of states with this rank	9	6	4	12
Percent with this rank	90%	75%	57%	92%

NOTES

1. The regional alignments used here come from the U.S. Census Bureau: East, North Central, West and South. The three political culture types, traditionalistic, moralistic and individualistic, come from Elazar's original classification of states. Daniel J. Elazar, "The States and The Political Setting," Comparative State Politics: A Reader ed. by Donald P. Sprengel (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1971), pp. 34-59.

2. The authors decided to focus on these two educational policy measures after preliminary analysis showed few initial relationships between interest group and SEA measures and other educational centralization measures: the number of curriculum mandates enacted by states, whether states mandate teacher tenure and salary schedules, and a composite educational centralization measure developed by Frederick Wirt. Frederick Wirt, "Does Control follow the Dollar?' School Policy, State-Local Linkages, and Political Culture," Publius (Spring 1980), pp. 69-88.

3. Frederick M. Wirt, "Education Politics and Policies, Politics in the American States ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little Brown, 1976).

4. Jack L. Walker, "The Diffusion of Innovations Among The American States," American Political Science Review (September 1969), pp. 880-899.

5. Elazar, op. cit., p. 39.

6. Wirt, op. cit., p. 83.

7. Elazar, op. cit.

8. Ibid.

9. Wirt's centralization measure is a composite measure of thirty-six school policy areas identified by the National Institute of Education. A centralism score was then derived by judgments on the degree of state or local control in each of these policy areas. These policies include, for example, certification, safety and health standards, pupil transportation, textbook libraries, special education, and many others.

10. More specifically, Wirt found that nine of twelve states with elements of the traditionalistic political culture were strongly centralized and ranked high in terms of the state share of total state-local educational spending.

11. Classic examples of fiscal studies that include regional analysis include Ira Sharkansky, Spending in the American States (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1968) and Ira Sharkansky, Regionalism in the American States (Indianapolis: Bobbs - Merrill, 1970).

12. William E. Hudson, "The Transformation in Federal-Local Relations 1960-1980: Alternative Explanations from Empirical Democratic Theory," paper delivered at the Southwestern Social Science Association Meeting, San Antonio, March 17-20, 1982.

13. Ibid., pp. 18-22.

14. Ibid., p. 19.

15. Roger Cobb et al., "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process," American Political Science Review (March 1976), p. 137.

16. Frederick Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, "State Politics of Education," The Educational Establishment ed. by Elizabeth L. and Michael Useem (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 78.

17. Ibid.

18. Michael D. Usdan, "The Role and Future of State Educational Coalitions," Educational Administration Quarterly (Spring 1969), pp. 34-35.

19. John Jarolimek, The Schools in Contemporary Society (New York: Macmillan, 1981), p. 274.

20. In order to test for the spuriousness of relationships between interest group and SEA resources and policy choices, controls were introduced for socioeconomic variables showing strong correlations with policy measures. The three socioeconomic factors identified were population, urbanization, and income. The resultant third-order partial correlation coefficients show the following significant relationships (.05 level or better) between resource measures and policy: (1) AFT organization and text centralization, (2) percent organized and textbook centralization, (3) NEA dominance and text centralization, (4) SEA total budget and CBE centralization, (5) SEA white-collar salaries and CBE centralization and (6) per-pupil white-collar salaries and CBE centralization. The direction of relationships remains the same as those reported earlier (simple correlation coefficients). In other words, it does not appear that relationships between interest groups and SEA resources and policy are artifacts of the underlying socioeconomic conditions analyzed here.

21. The CBE variable was dichotomized for tabular presentation in percentage tables and for classifications in Appendix B. However, in the regression analysis (Hypothesis 1) and for the difference-of-means test, the variable was trichotomized: (1) state direction of CBE programs, (2) state guidelines for CBE programs and (3) local option for CBE programs. Data were collapsed into the two categories for percentage table presentation to simplify presentation of results.

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APPENDIX A

Data sources for interest group, State Education Agency, and policy variables.

A. Interest Group Characteristics

1. Number of NEA members: Department of Labor statistics (unpublished)

2. Number of AFT members: Department of Labor statistics (unpublished)

3. Percent of organized teachers (NEA plus AFT members, divided by total teachers): Department of Labor (NEA, AFT); Census of Governments data, "Full-Time Equivalent Employment of State and Local Governments" Public Employment (teachers).

4. NEA dominance (constructed by dividing NEA members by total AFT and NEA members): Department of Labor statistics.

B. Characteristics of State Education Agencies (SEAs)

1. Administrative, professional, and clerical staff salaries: Geraldine Scott and Paul Dunn, Statistics of State School Systems, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics.

2. Total SEA staff: See source above (B-1).

3. Total budget: State Departments of Education and Federal Programs: Annual Report.

4. Administrative, professional, and clerical staff salaries (B-1), calculated on a per-pupil basis (constructed by dividing SEA staff salaries by school-age population for each state): National Center for Education Statistics (SEA salaries); Book of the States (school-age population data).

C. Educational Policy Centralization Measures

1. Textbook selection procedures (calculated as number of state specifications governing the process of textbook selection, from 0 to 5): Jim Milliot (ed.), Instructional Materials Adoption Data File, published by E. A. Minsker. Copyright by Knowledge Industry Publications, Inc., White Plains, New York.

2. Competency-based education programs: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction data.

D. Socioeconomic data come from census data.

APPENDIX R

State rankings on salient interest group, State Education Agency, and policy variables by region and political culture.

Region and Political Culture[1]		Percent Teachers Organized[2]	SEA White-Collar Salaries[3]	Text Centralization[4]	CBE Centralization[5]
South					
Alabama	T	High	High	High	High
Arkansas	T	Low	Low	High	Low
Florida	T	Low	High	High	High
Georgia	T	Low	High	High	High
Kentucky	T	Low	High	High	High
Louisiana	T	Low	High	High	High
Mississippi	T	Low	Low	High	Low
North Carolina	T	Low	High	High	High
Oklahoma	T	High	High	High	High
South Carolina	T	Low	High	High	High
Tennessee	T	High	High	High	Low
Texas	T	Low	High	High	Low
Virginia	T	Low	Low	High	High
West Virginia	T	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
West					
Arizona	T	Low	Low	High	High
California	M	High	High	High	High
Colorado	M	Low	Low	Low	High
Idaho	M	Low	Low	High	High
Montana	M	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
Nevada	I	Low	Low	High	High
New Mexico	T	Low	Low	High	High
Oregon	M	Low	Low	High	High
Utah	M	High	Low	High	High
Washington	M	High	Low	Low	High
Wyoming	I	High	Low	Low	High

Region and Political Culture[1]		Percent Teachers Organized[2]	SEA White-Collar Salaries[3]	Text Centralization[4]	CBE Centralization[5]
North-Central					
Kansas	M	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
Illinois	I	High	High	Moderate	Low
Indiana	I	Low	Low	High	Low
Iowa	M	High	Low	Low	Low
Michigan	M	High	High	Moderate	Low
Minnesota	M	High	High	Moderate	Low
Missouri	I	Low	High	Moderate	High
Nebraska	I	High	Low	Low	High
North Dakota	M	High	Low	Moderate	Low
Ohio	I	High	High	Moderate	Low
South Dakota	M	Low	Low	Low	Low
Wisconsin	M	High	High	Moderate	Low
East					
Connecticut	I	High	High	Low	Low
Delaware	I	High	Low	Moderate	High
Maine	M	Low	Low	Low	High
Maryland	I	Low	High	Low	Low
Massachusetts	I	High	High	Low	Low
New Hampshire	M	Low	Low	Low	High
New Jersey	I	High	High	Low	High
New York	I	High	High	Low	Low
Pennsylvania	I	High	Low	Low	Low
Rhode Island	I	High	Low	Low	High
Vermont	M	High	Low	Low	High

1 Political culture types are these: T is traditionalistic, M is moralistic, and I is individualistic.

2 Percent Teachers Organized is the total AFT and NEA members in a state divided by total teachers. These percentages are dichotomized into highs and lows.

3 SEA white-collar salaries are total salary figures; data were dichotomized into high and low categories.

4 Text centralization was divided into three categories, high (centralized), moderate (somewhat centralized) and low (decentralized).

5 CBE centralization is characterized into a state role (centralized) or no state role (decentralized).